

## Wirral Way

The Countryside Act 1968 enabled country parks to be established. The Wirral Way linear country park was identified in a report by the then Cheshire County Council in April 1968. It was the first designated country park in Britain and was opened in 1973 by Lord Leverhulme.

The description in the report for Hadlow Road Station (called Willaston (Hadlow Road) Station) was as follows:

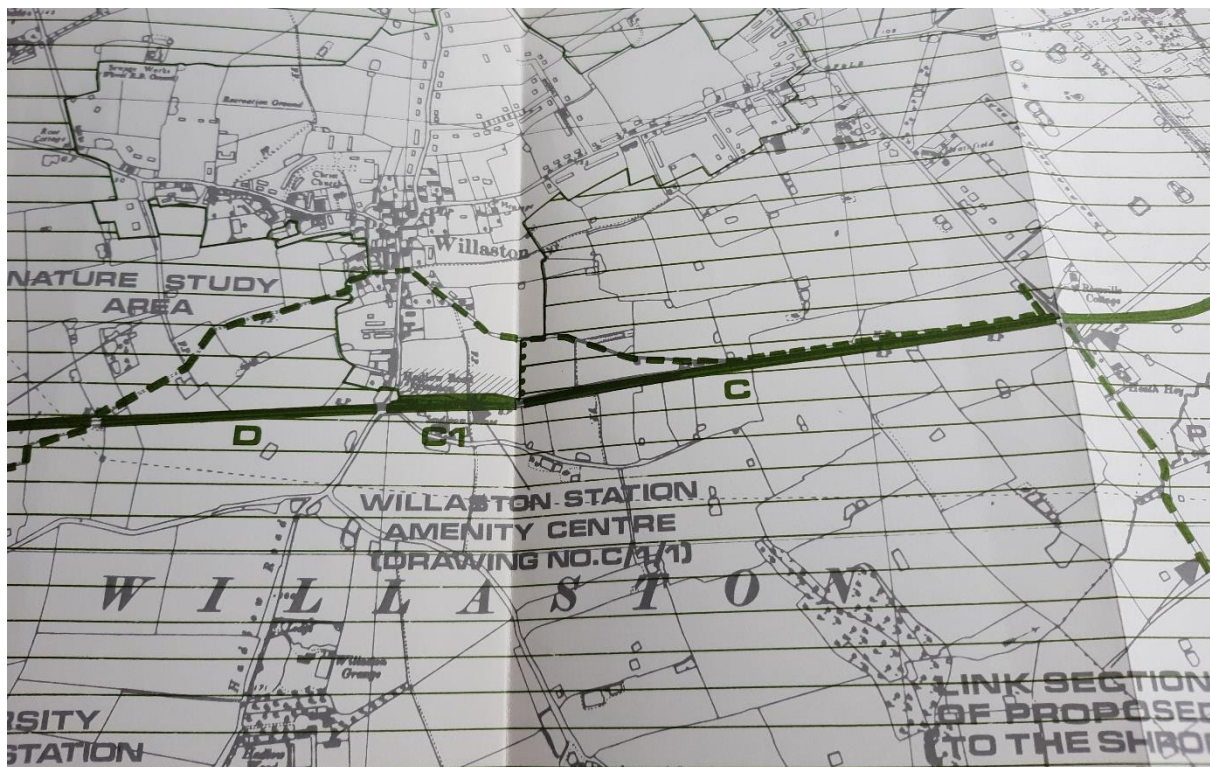
*Although the railway track has been dismantled, the station house, which is over 100 years old, is still occupied and is in reasonable condition. Some of the buildings on the northern platform are of wooden construction and are derelict. The southern platform is in poor condition and all the coping stones have been removed. Also on the platform is a small brick waiting room, which is of no value. The level crossing gates on Hadlow Road still exist but are in poor condition. To the east of the station is the old goods yard. To the north of the station is the Wallcroft housing estate which is unsightly from the railway line. To the south the land is in agricultural use.'*

The proposals in the report for Hadlow Road Station were:

1. *This should be an Amenity Centre. Work to be done would include renovation of the station house for use by a warden, the demolition of derelict buildings and the provision of toilets and formal car parking facilities.*
2. *The southern platform should be dismantled and the remaining bank planted with shrubs.*
3. *Trees and shrubs should be planted to screen the car park from the houses to the north.*
4. *A building should be provided incorporating a garage for a land-rover, workshops and stores.*
5. *The possibility of setting up a railway museum is being investigated.*



There was a budget of £250,000, with 50% covered by a central government grant. The Territorial Army helped to build bridges along the Wirral Way



Map from the Cheshire Council 'Scheme for a Wirral Country Park' (above) and proposals for Willaston Station below – note the overflow parking area to the left.

